

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A starter comprising:

a starter motor driven in response to supply of electric power for generating a rotational force transmitted to an armature;

a planetary reduction gear device for reducing a rotational speed of said armature, said planetary reduction gear device comprising a sun gear provided on a rotary shaft of said armature, planetary gears meshing with said sun gear, and an internal gear meshing with said planetary gears;

an output shaft, supported by a housing, said output shaft is connected to said armature via said planetary reduction gear device for outputting a reduced rotation of said armature;

a pinion gear provided on said output shaft for selectively meshing with a ring gear of an engine; and

a shock absorbing device comprising a plurality of first friction plates each of which is provided stationarily to said housing and a plurality of second friction plates, each of which is provided stationarily to said internal gear, and receiving a torque transmitted from said internal gear,

wherein said plurality of first and second friction plates are laminated with each other so as to be brought into frictional engagement when said first friction plates and said second friction plates are pressed by pressing means, thereby obtaining a predetermined frictional torque.

2. (Original) The starter in accordance with claim 1, wherein said shock absorbing device comprises a transmitting section interposed between said second friction plates and said internal gear.

3. (Original) The starter in accordance with claim 2, wherein said transmitting section comprises a first cylindrical portion engaged with an outer cylindrical surface of said internal gear and a second cylindrical portion engaged with an inner cylindrical portion of said second friction plates, and a diameter of said second cylindrical portion is smaller than a diameter of said first cylindrical portion.

4. (Original) The starter in accordance with claim 1, wherein said shock absorbing device is positioned next to said internal gear.

5. (Currently Amended) The starter in accordance with claim 1, wherein one end of said output shaft is configured into a flange portion for supporting said planetary reduction gear device, and said shock absorbing device is disposed in a radially extending space defined between said flange portion and-a said housing accommodating said flange portion.

6. (Original) The starter in accordance with claim 1, wherein said first friction plates are engaged with an engaging portion of said housing, and said engaging portion of said housing extends in a direction along which said first and second friction plates are laminated.

7. (Currently Amended) The starter in accordance with claim 3, wherein said second cylindrical portion has a caulking portion, made by bending a front end of said second cylindrical portion, for engaging for fixedly supporting said pressing means.